Creative Writing in English and EFL Students: Finding Motivation in Self-expression

Patrick Dougherty
Akita International University

Abstract

This article details an investigation of the application of creative writing to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at two universities, one in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the other in Dhaka, Bangladesh. It asks three questions: (1) do EFL students perceive creative writing in English as motivational in their English studies, (2) does creative writing in English encourage EFL students to write in English outside of the classroom, and (3) does creative writing in English motivate EFL students to be better users of English? The answers to these questions have universal applications to other English programs, in other settings, in other countries. The study outlined in this article will demonstrate that introducing creative writing to EFL programs can serve as a powerful motivational force in the classroom, benefiting the students academically, emotionally, and linguistically.

Introduction

The researcher began his teaching career in the late 1980s as a high school English and English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in the United States. At that time he would not have associated the teaching of creative writing with the part of his assignment that had him working with ESL students. He thought, at the time, that creative writing was the domain of the native speaker of the language in which the writing will be done. Yet, even in his content teaching of English literature and composition he encountered examples, such as the writers Joseph Conrad and Chinua Achebe, who showed that significant pieces of literature have been written by writers using their second language as the medium of expression (Gioia and Gwynn, 2006). From that time, the researcher has changed his view of creative writing and those who might be helped to better their linguistic skills by using it in the classroom.

This study examines the use of creative writing with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at two universities, one in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and the other in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates. The study asks three questions: (1) do EFL students perceive creative writing in English as motivational in their English studies, (2) does creative writing in English encourage EFL students to write in English outside of the classroom, and (3) does creative writing in English motivate EFL students to be better users of English?

Rationale

Discussion of second language learner (L2) motivation has some pedigree, and can be traced back to, among others, the Canadian social psychologists Lambert and Gardner (Gardner, 2009). In 1959, they initiated an exploration into the issues surrounding L2 learner motivation, using a social and psychological approach. They found that learning another language is dissimilar from any other educational objective in that it necessitates that the individual accepts elements of an alien culture into the context of his or her life (Gardner, 2009).

Keller (1983) as cited in Dornyei, (2001b, p. 116) went so far as to argue that motivation should be at the center of the education dynamic; yet, it was often neglected in academic discourse. This is in agreement with Dornyei (2001a):

Teachers are supposed to teach the curriculum rather than motivate learners, and the fact that the former cannot happen without the latter is often ignored. For example, I am not aware of a single L2 teacher-training program worldwide in which the development of skills in motivating learners would be a key component of the curriculum. (p. 27)

How do we encourage motivation, or enhance it if it is already in existence, or maintain it if it is waning? Noels (2001, p. 54) identified three psychological needs that must be accommodated to activate motivation:

a. The subject must acquire a sense of competency by surmounting challenges in the attainment of a goal.
b. The subject should be autonomous in pursuit of a goal.
c. The subject must have a sense of relatedness.

The term "relatedness" Noels (2001) explained, is a state where the subject feels ". . . connected to, and esteemed, by others belonging to a larger social whole (p. 54)."

How does this apply to L2 learning? According to Lo and Hyland (2007), one method of increasing students' motivation is to redevelop L2 writing classes. The courses should be redesigned in two ways: (1) to ensure that activities are relevant to the students' lives, what Lo and Hyland (2007) related as being their "social and cultural context," and (2), the courses should allow opportunities for "social interaction and self-expression (p. 221)." In the context of this research, in both the study conducted in the UAE and the recent study conducted in Bangladesh, students were encouraged to delve into their social and cultural contexts for raw materials for their creative writing. The essence of the course in Bangladesh was creative writing, and an important component of the courses in the UAE study was a set of creative writing assignments.

The researcher believes that the use of creative writing can allow the student to take the L2 and use it for his or her own purposes; i.e., to share his or her artistic and personal vision in the target language. In essence, creative writing will allow the student to make the language his or her own possession.

The Study

There were two parts to this study, one was an investigation into creative writing and EFL student motivation conducted in the UAE in 2009. The other element of the study was an enquiry into the same set of questions but done in Bangladesh in 2014. A portion of the findings from the original UAE study have been published as a chapter in a refereed, edited book (Dougherty, 2010) by the present researcher, and it will be cited as such when necessary. However, the researcher revisited the primary sources from the 2009 study, reviewing the survey data for new insights and new perspectives for this current investigation.

Results from the two components were compared in relation to the research questions. This allowed the researcher to answer his research questions from a more expansive vantage point, taking in different types of subjects, from different contexts of instruction, different cultural settings and first languages, and making a comparison of findings. What was a narrow study in the setting of the 2009 research has been greatly expanded. The data is greater in quantity and deeper in focus.

What follows is a précis of the study. It covers the contexts, background on the research subjects, offers a discussion of the courses and how creative writing was taught or integrated into them, and finally, outlines the data collection methods used in both the UAE and in Bangladesh.

The Contexts

The study in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was conducted at a public university in Abu Dhabi in 2009. The research subjects were enrolled in the Higher Diploma Foundations English program. The Higher Diploma Foundations English program was established for students studying for entry into Bachelor of Science programs. Those programs required an IELTS band of 5.0 or a TOEFL PBT score of 433 or an iBT score of 40 (Higher Colleges of Technology, 2014). The Higher Diploma Foundations English program was established for college applicants, ". . . who meet the general admissions requirements but do not meet the program placement criteria for Bachelor of Applied Science programs [and are therefore] enrolled into Foundations Studies programs which will assist students to meet the entry requirements for the Bachelor of Applied Science" (Higher Colleges of Technology, 2014, para. 10).

In Bangladesh, the researcher taught an intensive course in Creative Writing in English to EFL students at a private university in Dhaka, in September, 2014. The purpose was to confirm the findings of an earlier study; that creative writing in English can serve as a motivational force for EFL students. This was the fourth such course the researcher had taught at the same private university in Dhaka. However, the earlier courses, taught annually from 2006 – 2008, had eighteen class meetings spread over a five week term of study. Each class met for two and one half hours, three times per week (Dougherty & Dougherty, 2008). In this instance, in the 2014 class, due to the researcher's time constraints the course was taught as an intensive program that met over a two week period.

The UAE Study

In the UAE study, there were fifteen participants. They were self-selected, as the survey they took was voluntary. They were all male. Most were in their first year of post-secondary education. They were from three separate classes taught at the same college. They were offered the opportunity to take the survey at the end of their course of studies with the researcher. Each class had between fifteen and twenty students. Two of the three classes were company or government sponsored, meaning that the students were receiving scholarships from the company or the government in exchange for agreeing to work for the sponsor for a set number of years after graduation. When asked what their major area of study was at the college, almost half of the respondents listed some form of engineering. The rest of the subjects that responded to the question listed some form of science focus for their studies. The students were taught English writing by the researcher conducting this current study. They were all in the Higher Diploma Foundations course and were studying English for approximately fifteen contact hours per week for twenty weeks.

Education in the public primary and secondary schools of the UAE is conducted in Arabic. Education in the public universities is conducted in English, save for some specific, religion focused, courses of study. However, some Emirati families send their children to private English medium primary or secondary schools. In the case of the fifteen UAE subjects, six attended Arabic medium primary and secondary schools, three attended English medium primary and secondary schools, five attended Arabic medium elementary schools and switched to English medium high schools, and one attended an English medium primary school and then switched to an Arabic medium high school. Regarding their English ability, they were asked to identify what they perceived was their level for spoken and written English. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

UAE subjects' ranking of their spoken and written English

UAE subjects ranked their Spoken English [15 subjects]			
Excellent	Good	Average	Basic
20% (3 respondents)	47% (7 respondents)	20% (3respondents)	13% (2 respondents)
UAE subjects ranked their Written English [15 subjects]			
Excellent	Good	Average	Basic
13% (2 respondents)	40% (6 respondents)	47%(7 respondents)	0%

THE BANGLADESH STUDY

There were eighteen students in the course in Bangladesh. There were five men and thirteen women. The majority of them were traditional university students, aged in their early twenties, but there were also five older students who were in their 30s, 50s, and 60s. One of the older students one was a high school English teacher, one was a staff member at the university, and another was a retired educator. The other two had returned to university to complete their degrees.

In Bangladesh, students may study in English language elementary and secondary schools or in Bangla elementary or secondary schools. Eight of the students completed both their elementary and secondary educations in Bangla medium schools, six completed their pre-tertiary educations in English medium schools, and four studied in English medium elementary schools and then switched to Bangla medium high schools.

The eighteen Bangladesh respondents were asked to rate their English ability. Their responses are shown below in Table 2:

Table 2

Bangladesh subjects' ranking of their spoken and written English

Bangladesh subjects ranked their Spoken English [18 subjects]		
Excellent or good	Average or basic	Poor
56% (10 respondents)	39% (7 respondents)	5% (1 respondents)
Bangladesh subjects ranked their Written English [18 subjects]		
Excellent or good	Average or basic	Poor
61% (11 respondents)	39% (7 respondents)	0%

As membership in the creative writing course was optional, students lacking confidence in their writing ability might not have been willing to join; hence the confidence level for writing tended to be high for the participants.

In the UAE study, the students took fifteen hours of English class time per week. The contact hours were divided between the skill areas of reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The researcher taught the writing component. A variety of course materials were used. Students had laptops and access to the Internet, they were provided with level appropriate textbooks, and their classes were further enhanced by teacher generated materials that included creative writing lessons and assignments.

Creative writing was introduced to the students via both special assignments and additions to regular course offerings. Each of the three courses from which the research subjects were

generated received the same creative writing instruction, and completed the same set of creative writing assignments.

The researcher conducted several creative writing based lessons throughout the term with each of the surveyed classes. The first creative writing assignment was also the opening assignment of the class. It is offered here as an example of the type of activities completed by the students. Called a "Three-Staged Introduction," the assignment was an activity where the students worked individually and with a partner. It was designed as an ice-breaker and to give the students a chance to introduce themselves and get to know another student in the class. The assignment asked the student to create (1) an acrostic poem using their name as the starting point, (2) respond to three reflective questions, (3) exchange papers with a student and then respond to three prompts for descriptions of the student. Examples of student responses to some of the sections are shown below in Figure 1:

Stage 1: The Acrostic Poem
      M -- *Manly and into sports*
      A – *Able to do many things at once*
      R – *Relieved to get into college*
      W – *Waleed is my best friend for all time*
      A – *Argumentative about sports teams*
      N – *Nervous about examinations*

Stage 2: Reflective Questions
1. If you could be an animal, what animal would you be?
   Answer: *A falcon*
2. If you could be a color, what color would you be?
   Answer: *Blue*
3. If you could be a child's toy, what toy would you be?
   Answer: *A toy airplane*

Stage 3: Descriptions
1. How would a blind person describe this individual?
   He talks loudly and too quickly. He snores in class. He has a loud car.

2. How would a deaf person describe this individual?
   He is skinny and doesn't eat anything. He always wears sunglasses. He likes baseball caps.

3. How would a three year old child describe this individual?
   He is scary because I cannot see his eyes. He never gives me candy. Maybe he is nice, maybe he is not. I want my mom.

Figure 1. The Three-Staged Introduction Assignment used in the UAE study (Dougherty, 2010, p. 45)

Furthermore, and with the intention of helping to motivate students, the researcher held a series of Poetry Slam festivals at the university. A Poetry Slam is a poetry competition where poets share their work with other poets and interested audience members. Though a competition, the Abu Dhabi event was organized to offer students the opportunity to read their poems aloud in front of teachers and peers rather than as a competitive occasion. Nonetheless, awards were given for Best Dressed Poet, Most Imagery in a Poem, Funniest Poem, Best Delivery, Most Eye Contact with the Audience, and the Best of Show. Additionally, all those who read poems were invited to submit their work for inclusion in an anthology: *The Sundial Poets: The collected works of the*

1st ADMC Poetry Slam. Twenty-three students submitted work to the anthology. There was a book launch for the anthology. The students were able to autograph each other's copy of the anthology and have pictures taken.

One teacher who encouraged her students to participate in the first Poetry Slam reflected on her experience in using some of the researcher's creative writing lessons to help prepare her students, who were taking the same level of English Foundations courses as the researcher was teaching at the time. She reflected on her students' initial reactions to writing poetry and how she overcame their hesitancy:

Students: 'Write a poem in English?'
Student A: I can't do this even in Arabic, no, not me, no, teacher...please!
Student B: A poem about what?
Student C: Will it be on the progress test?
Teacher: O.K. Watch...this is one way to do it......

Bit by bit a simple beach, or car were transformed by 'juicy pineapples dripping ...thick exhaust blackening'. Then the re-writes ventured more exotically into daring metaphor and descriptive vocabulary and images. 'My Pepsi beats my thirst.' Sandcastle forts shooting arrows;' 'A student snoring, drilling dreams into his desk.' Each succeeding poem improved upon itself and pride and accomplishment were expressed. Fancy and creativity emerged, smiles widened, but the voluntary contributions and the addition of students' own but unsolicited artwork proved there had been a "Click!" (M. Berguin, personal communication, February 26, 2010)

The Bangladesh course met 13 times, for three hours per class meeting, from September 13th – September 27th, 2014, with two days off for religious observances on Friday, September 19th, and Friday, September 26th. This allowed the course, officially titled by the registrar's office as LIT 353.1 (Creative Writing), to be granted a three credit hour full course status, as the institutional requirement for that designation was a thirty-nine contact hour schedule.

The students were informed of the research objectives of the researcher and also given an overview of the pedagogical purpose of the course, its pedigree at the institution, and given an outline of the specific course goals. The syllabus for the course can be found in Appendix A.

For this short course the researcher focused on three genres: memoir, poetry, and short story. Production was encouraged at each class meeting, and students brought in their work for peer review and assistance. Examples of the genres were obtained from stories and poems written in English by Bengali storytellers and poets. Students were required to complete a short memoir piece, a poem, and the outline of a short story to be submitted by December 31, 2014. Additionally, there were two writing journal entries, a mid-course quiz and a final examination. As most of the students had never taken a creative writing course before, much attention was given to the writing process and the elemental structures of short stories and poetry. As an artifact of the course, and to help motivate the students, the researcher announced to the class members that he would collect student stories and poems in a publishable format.

Data Collection

In the case of the UAE study, the data was collected via an English language Internet survey given to three classes of students during the 2009 academic year. The survey was voluntary, and a total of fifteen subjects out of a potential of approximately forty-five students self-selected to respond. Respondents were expected to answer the questions in English. The survey was

introduced to the students during the final week of classes for their term of studies in the researcher's English class. They were then sent the link to the on-line survey and instructed that, if they chose to complete the survey, they had a two week window of time to do so before the link would be closed.

In Bangladesh, on the final day of class, after the class finished, students were invited to complete a forty-one question survey. They were instructed that the survey was anonymous. The survey was in English and subjects were expected to answer all questions in English. There was a mix of yes/no and multiple choice responses, as well as ranking questions and thirteen free response questions. Due to a lack of computer access, the survey was paper-based. Though voluntary, all eighteen of the students stayed and completed the survey. The researcher left the room in which the subjects were completing the survey and the completed surveys were collected by a volunteer graduate student.

The survey questions in both cases also included questions aimed at specific course improvement and specific institutional contexts. There were, between the two survey tools, twenty identical questions geared at ascertaining how the course had impacted students' motivation and their sense of self improvement in key skill areas. There were five additional free response questions added to the Bangladesh survey to elicit more specific information about the impact of the course on student motivation to study English and improve their English language abilities. These questions were added in light of perceived needs for deeper questioning after the researcher's experience with the 2009 study. The twenty questions, and the five additional questions for the Bangladesh survey, are shown in Appendix B.

Findings

The findings are categorized by the research questions. The research questions are: (1) do students perceive creative writing in English as motivational in their English studies, (2) does creative writing in English encourage students to write in English beyond the classroom, and (3) does creative writing in English motivate EFL students to be better users of English? For the discussion of free response questions, the research subjects from the UAE have been designated as Subjects A – O and the subjects from Bangladesh have been designated as Subjects I – XVIII. The subjects in the UAE part of the study were all male. The subjects in the Bangladesh part of the study were of both genders.

Question 1: Do students perceive creative writing in English as motivational in their English studies?

In the UAE survey, a question asked if students found creative writing to be a motivational experience. Of the fourteen subjects who responded to the question, 71%, or ten of the fourteen, responded in the affirmative. In the case of the Bangladesh respondents, 100%, or all eighteen, affirmed that the creative writing course was motivational for them. Additionally, one question in the Bangladesh survey asked the respondents to scale how much the course motivated them in their English studies. On a scale of 1 – 4 with 1 being not at all and 4 being very much, twelve of the eighteen Bangladesh subjects scaled their motivation at 4 and six gave a rank of 3 to their sense of motivation.

In answers offered to a free response question asking the UAE respondents about the benefits of having creative writing as part of their English course, Subject A said simply, "It helps us to improve our English." Subject D added that it, "Improved the skills," and Subject F stated, enigmatically, "It helps you in your life." Subject G felt that one benefit of having creative writing as part of an English course was that it helped to "...improve your thinking."

The Bangladesh respondents, when asked if the course was motivational for them and in what sphere of their lives, had myriad answers. Of the seventeen subjects who responded to the prompt, all stated, in one manner or another that the course was motivational. Some examples of answers were, from Subject XII, "This class was very motivational for me not only for my academic career but also for my private career . . . through this class I have learned how to write and how to speak." Subject XI responded, "I learned to write creatively, what I never did before. . . I felt enthusiastic to write about stories and different personalities." Finally, we have the reply of Subject IV, "Undoubtedly! In every sphere of life . . . my writing instinct will never give a pause now!"

When asked if the experience of writing creatively would encourage them to read more English language literature, 67%, or twelve of the eighteen Bangladesh subjects, responded that it did encourage them and that they would read more literature. When asked if the course had encouraged them to read more English language literature, 100% of the Bangladesh subjects responded affirmatively.

The responses of the subjects in the UAE study affirm that the respondents perceived creative writing as being motivational in their English studies. They also indicated that they felt that having creative writing as part of their English course benefited them in both academic and social spheres. This pattern of thought was maintained in the responses of the Bangladesh study participants. They overwhelmingly affirmed that creative writing was motivational. They felt that it benefited them academically and in other parts of their lives.

Question 2: Does creative writing in English encourage students to write in English beyond the classroom?

In the case of the UAE study, 93%, or fourteen of the fifteen respondents, answered that they would continue to write in English. Furthermore, 100% of the UAE respondents felt that creative writing had helped to improve their written English. Asked if they would share their creative work with others, 61%, or nine, stated in the affirmative. When asked how they would go about sharing their creative writing, some spoke of sharing their work with friends. Subject B explained, "We will do it as a group . . . and we can share." When asked what activities in the class were the most helpful in making this improvement, Subject A discussed the different types of "formats" that were introduced and that helped to improve his writing and vocabulary. Subject H stated that the process of writing something every day was beneficial. Subjects K and N felt that one activity, where the instructor showed video clips from a series of movies and then had the students write a paragraph from the perspective of one of the characters was useful in encouraging them to write.

Responding to a question asking if, after taking the course, the students felt more motivated to write in English, all of the Bangladesh participants, 100%, stated that yes, they were more motivated to write in English. Regarding how often they would try to write, 67%, or twelve out of the eighteen, indicated that they would do so weekly or even daily. The rest stated that they would write creatively at least monthly.

The Bangladesh subjects were given a selection of ways in which they might share their creative writing, and we told that they could select more than one possible outlet. Most of the respondents, sixteen of the eighteen, selected making newspaper or writer's magazine or journal submissions. Public readings were of interest to eight of the subjects, and six of the subjects indicated that they might publish their own books and/or magazines. The "Other" category received votes from three of the respondents. To fathom what the "Other" category might be, a free response question was also included in the questionnaire. When asked how they would share

their creative writing with other people, Subjects I, III, VI, X, XII, XIV, XV, XVI, and XVIII all indicated that one method they would use to publish their creative work was the Internet, through blogs and personal websites.

The results of the UAE study reveal that the participants perceived that creative writing in English encourages students to write in English beyond the classroom. A majority of the subjects stated that they would continue to write in English and a majority indicated that they would share their work with their peers and the community. These findings were the same for the Bangladesh study, but with a heavier weight of respondents indicating that they would both continue to write in English and share their creative work with their peers and the community.

Question 3: Does creative writing in English motivate EFL students to be better users of English?

One question from the UAE study asked respondents to offer an opinion about whether creative writing motivates someone to become a better user of English. In response, Subject A explained that it was motivating in the sense it offered the chance to "explore more words and formats . . . ". Subject G stated, "Yes, because it's helping them to improve their English and also it lets them think in a wider way." Subject O offered that it gave him more "confidence in (himself)." Of the ten subjects who responded to the question, 80% made positive remarks, with the exceptions being Subject L who stated that he did not know, and Subject B saying that he felt he was not ready for creative writing.

In a series of questions in the UAE survey, the fifteen subjects were asked if creative writing had improved their abilities in the key areas of English language writing, reading, vocabulary acquisition, and public speaking. Regarding public speaking, as the normal procedure in the class was for students to verbally share their creative work with classmates, this encouraged them to work on such issues as eye contact, pronunciation, tone, and pacing. This was complimented by the preparation for, and participation in, the Poetry Slam. The results are shown in Table 3:

Table 3
Fifteen UAE subjects' self-identified improvement in key English skill areas

Improved English Writing		Improved English Reading Comprehension		Improved English Language Vocabulary		Improved skills in public speaking	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
100%	0%	100%	0%	93% (14)	7% (1)	87% (13)	13% (2)

When asked if they would recommend creative writing to other students to help them improve their English, 93%, or fourteen of the fifteen respondents, answered that they would recommend it to their peers. Finally, twelve of the fifteen respondents in the UAE study felt that creative writing should be offered as part of a normal university education.

In the case of the Bangladesh research subjects, when survey questions focused on individual language skills, as in the case of the UAE, the responses emphasized the benefits that accrued due to creative writing. As far as a sense of improvement in their English skills, a quartet of the questions from the survey asked them to decide on whether they had improved key English skills and comprehension levels. They were asked whether their writing skills, their reading comprehension, and their public speaking (frequent recitations of their stories and poems were class requirements) had improved. Additionally, another question asked them whether they had improved their English language vocabulary. The results are shown in Table 4:

Table 4
Eighteen Bangladesh subjects' self-identified improvement in key English skill areas

Improved English Writing		Improved English Reading Comprehension		Improved English Language Vocabulary		Improved skills in public speaking	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
100%	0%	78% (14)	22% (8)	100%	0%	89% (16)	11% (2)

When asked if they felt that the course encouraged them to improve their English, 93%, or all but one of the eighteen respondents, agreed.

When queried if they would recommend creative writing to their peers, 100% of the eighteen Bangladesh respondents said that they would recommend the course. Furthermore, all but one of the eighteen respondents felt that creative writing should be part of a normal university education. When asked in a free response question whether creative writing would benefit someone outside of the English major in university, 100% of the respondents agreed. Subject II felt that it could benefit those outside of the English major by encouraging them to ". . . write imaginatively in English." Subject IV felt that ". . . one can't help learn at least something (even if outside the English major) or develop at least a bit of any of the four skills in language." Subject XI felt that creative writing ". . . inspires people to write on anything, raising our intrinsic motivation."

When asked what they saw as the benefits of taking a creative writing class, Subject IV deemed that the course, ". . . helps to develop all four skills of language." This was echoed by Subject V who felt that it "Enriched my reading, writing, and listening," and by Subject VIII who concluded that it had allowed for the development of "Fluency in speaking, listening, and free writing." Subject XIV was of the opinion that the course provided people who were "interested to write" a "fantastic way to explore [his or her] skills and push [his or her] boundaries to become a better writer." Subject XV felt that the course had "enriched" her in speaking and writing skills and felt "motivated forward for creative writing."

Regarding the second research question it was concluded in the UAE study and affirmed in the Bangladesh study that creative writing in English does motivate EFL students to be better users of English. The subjects stated so directly and indicated this via their assessments of their English language skill improvements and vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, in both the UAE and Bangladesh, the subjects indicated that they would recommend creative writing to their peers to help improve their English. Furthermore, in both studies the respondents indicated a majority opinion that creative writing should be part of a normal university curriculum. In the case of the Bangladesh study, the respondents overwhelmingly felt that such an inclusion would even be of benefit to those outside of the English major as well as within the English major.

Conclusion

This study has shown that those in the EFL context would benefit from being introduced to creative writing as part of their overall English language curriculum. The researcher believes that creative writing has many positive benefits for the EFL student. The research data gave clear answers.

To reiterate, there were three research questions asked in this case study: (1) do EFL students perceive creative writing in English as motivational in their English studies, (2) does creative writing in English encourage students to write in English outside of the classroom, and (3) does creative writing in English motivate EFL students to be better users of English? Each

question may be answered in the affirmative, supported by the data from both sets of subjects in this study, from both the UAE and from Bangladesh.

As explained in the introduction to this chapter, the answers to these questions are important for their universal applicability to EFL studies. Non-native speakers of English, from two separate countries, language groups, and histories and cultures have identified creative writing as beneficial to their language acquisition. Under these circumstances it would behoove administrators and teachers in EFL programs to include creative writing courses, or elements of creative writing at the least, in their curricula. As explained in the opening of this chapter, introducing creative writing to EFL programs can serve as a powerful motivational force in the classroom, benefiting the students academically, emotionally, and linguistically.

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Appendix A

The Syllabus for the Creative Writing Course in Bangladesh
Creative Writing in English
A special course for Bangladesh

Instructor: Dr. Patrick T. Dougherty

The desire to write grows with writing.
–Erasmus

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Creative Writing in English will provide an opportunity for students to hone their creative writing skills as well as provide a student-centered environment for English language immersion. Students will explore and develop their own ideas through the medium of creative writing. Students will read, write, and share their creative endeavors and providing constructive advice to their peers. The participants in the course will become a small community of writers, eager to compose, share, read, hear, and support.

COURSE GOALS
Students will learn and practice skills that help them craft unique and thoughtful work in English. They will sharpen their critical reading skills through reading, discussion, and writing assignments and will learn the conventions of critique and collaboration. They will maintain a portfolio of revised work and they will submit selected pieces of their creative work to a course literary book.

SPECIFIC COURSE OBJECTIVES FOR THE STUDENTS
Students will:
1. Write creatively and expressively in English
2. Use the appropriate vocabulary for critique
3. Use appropriate literary devices
4. Define the unique characteristics of poetry, fiction, plays, and nonfiction
5. Experiment with a variety of genres
6. Use appropriate pre-writing strategies
7. Develop ideas into draft form
8. Proofread, edit, and revise
9. Present as individuals, in pairs, and small groups
10. Give critiques in a constructive and respectful manner

SPECIFIC COURSE OBJECTIVES FOR THE INSTRUCTOR
To have students grow in confidence in their own ability to be creative, insightful, understanding, and helpful in an English language medium.
To collect enough brilliant examples of student creative work to make a course literary booklet to serve as a permanent reminder for the students of the experience of taking the course and to exhibit their talent to the wider community.

COURSE ORGANIZATION
 Study and writing will be organized around the following genres:
1. Memoir
2. Poetry
3. Short story

A range of activities will be included under each of these genres. However, in all settings serious attention will be given to the stages of the writing process: drafting, revising, editing, and presentation. Students will be expected to keep a reading/writing journal.

CONTENT OF THE COURSE

Creative endeavors flow from the student's knowledge and experience; therefore the course will not simply focus on technique, but will include the following two components:
   a. Production:exploration, development, and expression of ideas through writingand the importance of reflection in this process.
   b. Critique: reflecting on their own writing, responding critically to published writing as well as their peers' writing; participation in the interactive process between writer and audience.

TEXTS

Select examples of genre writings and creations will be provided in Xeroxed format for the students.

EVALUATION

Grades will be determined by a point system. Grades will be given for assignments done either in or outside of class. Aspects of grading will incorporate the mandated systems of the host institution(s). This might include a midterm examination and a final examination. As projected, students should expect to produce and be graded on these creative items (some of which will be completed individually and others as a team):

   A memoir sketch
   A 20 line (minimum) poem or set of poems
   One short story outline

And also these items:

   Two Writing Journal entries
   Participation in class activities
   A mid-course quiz
   A final examination

DAILY AGENDA

A day-to-day agenda of activities will be created for the course after finalization of the time, dates, and student number for the course is made. This will be provided to the participating students on the first day of the course, or very soon thereafter.

Appendix B

Joint Questions from the Bangladesh and UAE surveys with relevant questions added to the Bangladesh survey
   1. Has Creative Writing helped to improve your English language writing?
   2. Has Creative Writing improved your English language reading comprehension?
   3. Has Creative Writing helped to improve your English language vocabulary?
   4. Has Creative Writing helped improve your skills in public speaking?
   5. Regarding language, which type of a school did you attend in elementary (primary) school?

6. Regarding language, which type of a school did you attend in secondary school?
7. Would you recommend this course (Creative Writing) to others?
8. Did you find Creative Writing to be a motivational experience for you?
9. Do you think Creative Writing should be offered as part of a normal university education?
10. How would you rate your spoken English?
11. How would you rate your written English?
12. Did peer editing help you to improve your own writing?
13. As a result of the class will you read more English language literature?
14. As a result of the class will you read more Englishlanguage literature?
15. Has the course improved your understanding of literature?
16. Rate the quality of the Creative Writing class on a scale of 1 - 5 with 1 being "excellent" and 5 being "poor."
17. Which activities in the class were the most important in respect to improving your writing skills?
18. What do you see as the benefits of taking a Creative Writing course?
19. In your opinion, does taking a creative writing course benefit those outside the English major? If so, how?
20. After taking this course you can offer a justified opinion on this question: Does creative writing motivate someone to become a better "user" of English? Yes, no, and why?

Relevant questions added to the Bangladesh survey:

21. Was this class motivational for you? If so, in what areas of your life, academic or private, and in what ways?
22. Has the course encouraged you to read more literature?
23. After taking the course are you now more motivated to write in English?
24. Did the course encourage you to improve your English?
25. On a scale of 1 – 4 with 1 being not at all and 4 being very much, how much or how little did the course motivate you in your study of English?